Shrubland Bird Habitat Study

Collaborators:
Karen Glennemeier
  Judy Pollock
  Scott Meister
  Gary Glowacki
  John McCabe
Forest Preserve District of DuPage County
Lake County Forest Preserves
Cook County Forest Preserves

Bird Monitors:
  Glenn Gabanski
  Fran Morel
  Robert Sliwinski
  Jody and Jerry Zamirofski
  Cyndi Lubecki

Thanks to Bob and Karen Fisher for their financial support of this study.
Question:
Can we create shrubland bird habitat out of “junky” shrub thickets?

Hypothesis: We know many species prefer scattered shrublands in a grassy matrix over dense thickets, so mowing a checkerboard pattern into thickets should increase shrubland bird numbers.
But how sparsely should the shrubs be scattered?

How can we provide specific guidelines to land managers?
Mowing Treatments

Dense
10-20 m between clumps
24% shrub coverage

Sparse
40-60 m between clumps
14% shrub coverage

Control
No shrub removal
Hidden Lake Actual Mowing!
St. Luke’s Shrubland Mowing
Shrubland Birds of Concern

Black-billed Cuckoo
Northern Bobwhite
Loggerhead Shrike
Bell's Vireo
Blue-winged Warbler
Willow Flycatcher
Yellow-breasted Chat
Brown Thrasher
Field Sparrow
Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Vesper Sparrow
Orchard Oriole
Eastern Kingbird
Shrubland Birds of Concern By Site
## Species Effects

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Take Home Message
It is relatively easy, inexpensive, and quick to transform dense shrub thickets into useable habitat for shrubland birds of concern.

Caveats
We need more replicates, more uniformly dense treatment areas.
Not all species seem to benefit.
Further Questions

How might we create habitat for additional shrubland species, using this model?

When should we re-mow treatment areas?
Thanks to our Advisory Group

T. J. Benson
Lee Ramsey
Doug Stotz
Mike Ward